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**Don't Let Travel Scams Ruin Your Vacation**

By Jon Bruning, Nebraska Attorney General

The school year is winding down, and Nebraskans are beginning to plan their summer vacations. We all want to save a few dollars on travel, but don't let that leave you the victim of a costly scam.

You may be receiving letters, calls, e-mails or faxes indicating that you are the winner of a free vacation or that you are eligible for a discounted vacation package. Be very careful responding to these offers. Many consumers eventually end up discovering the "vacation of their dreams" is their worst nightmare.

In some cases, consumers arrive at the hotel and either find substandard accommodations or find that their hotel is unavailable. They are then offered the chance to "upgrade" for an additional fee. They may find their "cruise to the Bahamas" is a four-hour ferry boat ride with no "luxury" state rooms and poor quality food. Even worse, some consumers arrive at the airport or hotel and discover they have no reservations.

Here are some tips for considering vacation offers:

- Do not give your bank account information or credit card numbers to a solicitor without researching the company. (Visit the Better Business Bureau Web site at [www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org), or call the BBB in Omaha at 402-391-7535.)
- Before you sign up, ask what the price covers (airfare, hotel, meals), how many people are included, if there are restrictions on travel dates, and about any additional charges not included in the price.
- Get the name, address and phone number of the hotel, and check the facility's rating in a travel guide.
- Ask the company to put the offer in writing.
- Beware of inquiries about your income; the trip may actually be part of a pitch to sell time-share properties.

For the best chances of a worry-free vacation, we suggest you consult a travel agent or do your own planning directly with the airlines and hotels.

For more information about travel scams, contact our Consumer Protection Division, toll free at (800) 727-6432 or by visiting our Web site at [www.ago.ne.gov](http://www.ago.ne.gov).